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MY FIRST TRIP TO PALESTINE

(IN JULY, 1929)

By

EMANUEL HERTZ

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— FOREWORD —

This paper was prepared on board of the Steamship Ausonia the moment we left Alexandria, in order that a complete and accurate record might be made of what we considered a truly remarkable trip and a most wonderful experience. Little did we think that less than three weeks after we left would see the hand of the vandal and the cowardly assassin murder the pioneers and burn and destroy their work, the work of rebuilding Palestine, after San Remo; work commenced and continued and conducted by and with the consent and approbation of an entire civilized world. Whether the perpetrations of these carefully prepared plans of destruction and their agents are to go unpunished, and whether the victims of these diabolical crimes are to remain unavenged, depends upon the conscience of a justice loving and justice preaching humanity.

In the hope that justice will prevail and that those remaining may be comforted in their great sorrow, I dedicate these lines to those heroes and martyrs of a cause which has been seeking justice at the bar of humanity these two housand years.

E. H.

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By EMANUEL HERTZ

To one who has kept out of the field of Palestinian political controversy, but who has, however, been a neutral observer of events from the very beginning, contenting himself with being a private in the ranks of the millions who have hopefully watched the growth of the idea and its translation from theory to fact, the first visit to Palestine came as a most pleasant experience. Especially was this so in view of the many warnings of friends, good-natured and well intentioned in the extreme, as to the inopportuneness of the time, the dangers lurking in the climate, the effect of the change of temperature, innoculations, medicines, advice as to time of appearing in the open—or rather venturing from shelter against a burning sun, alarm as to the possibility of sunstroke and acquiring tropical diseases, the avoiding of certain food and vegetables, and especially the danger lurking in the drinking of unboiled water—were some of the "last rites" administered, when our decision became known and when we could no longer be swerved from our purpose.

Our determination became more certain in view of the fact that two former attempts to reach Palestine had failed when they were in their final stages of realization, so that this third effort could only have been side-tracked by some cause of the first magnitude.

The very crossing from Naples to Egypt which we came

to view with some foreboding, was the beginning of one of the most pleasant trips we had ever undertaken. The two splendid boats, one of which brought us to Alexandria and the other on which we made the return trip were the last word in comfort; the weather ideal, the passengers few and representative of the best—unlike those who crowd trans-Atlantic steamers at this time of the year. Egypt, the land of sleep and deserts, of wonders and of fellaheen of which we read, especially the part from Alexandria to Cairo, is much the same as are the meadows of New Jersey and Pennsylvania as you travel from New York to Washington at the same time of the year. Egypt alone deserves a trip by itself, so full of wonders and plentiful in ages-old monuments is that land, especially since the work of reclamation under the hegemony of Great Britain began. The Tut-on-Kamen exhibit, the Mosque and the old city alone are more than sufficient to repay the effort; and then there is the Nile.

Kantara on both sides of the Suez Canal is the first contact one has with Palestine, and you at once notice that this land of the millenia has fallen into the hands of young men and young women. The customs officials, a service which has coralled every ill-tempered individual into its ranks in all countries, is here handled by a number of young men, intelligently, expeditiously and politely, to an extent which forces on the traveller who has been subjected to all manner of unpleasant experiences, the pleasant contrast of how this thing can be done with a full performance of their duty, without violating every vestige of deceny and by men who do not persist in showing but scant consideration or courtesy for the stranger who in good faith desires to enter their country; and yet their examination at Kantara is as thorough as it is speedy.

Kantara at midnight is where you start for the long-awaited

visit to the Promised Land. Some few years ago the journey from this spot had to be continued on camels—now on the Wagon Lit. Some few await the crossing of the border into Palestine proper as you emerge from the desert, but most of the other passengers fall asleep, to wake up well within the boundaries of Palestine. Lydda (Ludd) is the station where you transfer for Jerusalem, part of the train going to Tel Aviv, the Jerusalem cars remaining, and a few minutes later you are on your last lap to the Holy City which is reached a few hours thereafter.

At Kantara, Ludd and Jerusalem you stop at modern stations much the same as are to be found in any other country; but you begin to note some differences. The Hebrew names on the stations, the interest the conductor begins to take in you: "Is this your first visit?" and "What are your impressions?" and the astonishing contrast of the scene which greets you in Jerusalem at the station, from that in Alexandria and Cairo, are alone worthy of note. In Egypt a perfectly prepared and trained host of porters and dragomen literally pounce upon you and drag your luggage through the car windows from your hand unless you resist with force, and by reason of the uniformity of garb you are not always sure whether two or twenty have served you. They all come for their rewards in groups of ten and twenty, and if you are a peace-at-any-price man you pay and buy your peace. This man has handed the grips out of the car from the man who took it from the racks, this group has taken it from him as it came out, the conductor supervised the job, this group has taken it to the hotel bus, this group has taken it from the bus hotel porter on the bus, this group has taken it from the bus into the foyer of the hotel, this one to the elevator in the hotel, this one into the rooms, and at last the man who super-

intended it in each instance—Baksheesh for all is the password. And they insist on getting it, and in amounts satisfactory to them, or the alternative of quarreling and literally fighting your way out of the maelstrom of an army of well-trained professional beggars in the garb of porters, against whom the guidebooks but insufficiently warn you. All this, of course, is aside from the quarrels among themselves as to who saw the victim first.

Not so with your entry into Palestine, either in Kantara or when you arrive at Jerusalem. And this is true of the whole country. The representatives of the few leading hotels meet you at a station before Jerusalem, and if you have no reservations they set forth the virtues and attractions of their respective hotels or pensions, and once you have made your decisions they take charge and good care of your belongings and you find them in your rooms in the hotel; for these men who thus assist you are generally the managers and waiters in the hotel.

From a modern railway terminal, over a well-paved road which is studded with new structures in the building, in an American automobile, you are taken to your hotel and you obtain the first glimpse of the "City on the Hill," the citadel which has been conquered and re-conquered, built, torn down and rebuilt, more often than any other city in recorded history, and this old city which remains ever new is now surrounded by new roads and new buildings of the newest type. It is a novel impression about Jerusalem to reach your hotel over streets as clean and well kept as the best in any other city, where you would expect only the old ruins and which are not to be seen in this new section of Jerusalem outside the wall; for the time being we only concerned ourselves with

the new—the inner city we left for Friday evening and the Sabbath.

It is thus the new city which occupied our attention at first. And it is here that the future will write its most important chapters. The hotels, small affairs compared with the hostelries of the great world cities, are scrupulously clean, the Kosher diet well cooked and tasty, utterly unlike what friends and advisers would lead you to expect. They, or at least most of them, magnify the shortcomings, but utterly fail to give credit to these pioneers in the Jerusalem hotel business for an honest effort that these people make to do their share of the day's work. With less formality than it takes to arrange for a trip to Versailles or Potsdam by motor car, you make your arrangements with a guide of real intelligence, and motor car owner and chauffeur for the trip and transportation for the whole stay in Palestine; within the hour your typewritten itinerary is in your room. There is a difference, however, and a material one, between Continental and Palestinian guides and chauffeurs—the chauffeurs to Potsdam or Versailles or Tivoli near Rome, or to Vesuvius or Pompeii or to the Pyramids or the Sphynx want to get their money and tip as quickly as possible, regardless of what you see or learn, and most of these are ignorant and prate parrot-like to equally ignorant sight-seers and seekers after the main objects of their tours; whereas the Palestine guide is ever on the lookout that you see and learn as much as possible, regardless of his remuneration. He is a propagandist for Palestine, a country which has never had a fair chance. The Pyramids and their approaches are literally barricaded by camel drivers and donkey riders and a host of guides and teachers and lecturers and their families, to say nothing of their assistants and the thousands of beggars and vendors of every conceivable article

—newspapers, jewelry, fly-swatters, stamps, canes, fruit, rugs, clothes, drinks, cigarettes, and every other thing that flesh is heir to. Whereas you can go through almost all the places of importance in Palestine, outside the inner city of Jerusalen without experiencing any of the unpleasant things which are forced on you in Cairo and the surrounding places of interest, and they are certainly legion.

A trip to the Dead Sea, the Jordan and Jericho, covering the places of interest on the road which can all hardly be touched upon in a short survey of this nature, is about the most exacting trip by reason of the dreary waste and lack of vegetation in that section. The whole area was never entirely reclaimed and such portions as were have gone to waste under the Arab's neglectful sway. The road to the Dead Sea, however, compares very favorably, indeed, with similar mountain roads in other countries and leads to the spot where the initiative of young men, of whom and on whom no sufficient admiration and praise can be expended—it is true they do not seek it—will lead to incalculable good, not only for that particular spot but for all Palestine. Their problem and definite plan is to wrest the chemical wealth and power of the Dead Sea and expend it and so train it as to reclaim what remains arid and waste in that section, a most difficult undertaking, and distribute the wealth thus gained to improve other sections of the country and employ the army of these young romantic adventurers, many of whom spurn salaries five times in amount, who fear nothing and to whom nothing seems impossible—to do just this work.

This effort in the south is supplemented by a similar effort in the north of Palestine, of which we will have occasion to say more hereafter. These men are unconcerned as to whether Palestine is to remain a show place, a place of relics, of holy

remains, of recollections and of reminiscences. This is the last thing that concerns them. Their eyes are set to the future. They are repairing the damage, the neglect and the destruction of the ages. They are building a land and modernizing it, which has been moribund these eighteen hundred years. They are endowing it with all that a land requires in order to live and prosper—roads, trees, canals, water works, terraces on the side of the mountains—which their former owners permitted to be neglected and destroyed. They are fighting disease, malaria, poison breathing marshes—which have destroyed the inhabitants for two thousand years. They are planting trees, without which no land can exist. I am neither prophet nor seer nor agricultural nor engineering expert, but it seems to me, with a will to succeed of this kind, universally permeating the workers, even the hills of Judea will resume their former outward garb. These men and their machinery will do what the wailing of the millenia has failed to accomplish. These men don't quit. What they undertake they finish. If in doubt, examine the road from Jerusalem to Jericho—and become convinced.

The next morning we saw the University on Mt. Scopus, from which came the deadly assault of Rome and all of Zion's enemies against the citadel on the hill. The University, the very existence of which is and was doubted by many in far off America—and if ever a University was a fact this is, here a beautiful fact destroys an ugly slander. It is a great University now with even a greater future. Its great library building is nearing completion and is to be the wing to the Hall of the Humanities wherein the departments which constitute a University in the largest and fullest sense are to be adequately housed. The chemical department, the zoological department, the agricultural department — are even now

functioning in cramped quarters and are to be released as soon as the new buildings planned can be completed. The Chancellor of the University, the youthful and perenially young Dr. Magnes, is the presiding genius of this great University, and while conferring with his guests is constantly interrupted by telephone call and by visitor—who knocks at the door—and in a melodious voice the Chancellor says: "Yovoh" and in comes the visitor and is received by the kindly Chancellor, and is disposed of as quickly as the subject permits. Had ever a Chancellor a similar faculty or Board of Advisors? The best in many lands respond to his call—none too great to refuse—and with such men, such material in the young men, all young, who surround him, the future of the University is indeed immense and its world influence incalculable. One cannot see much in a forenoon but that was all we could afford in our hasty program.

But I must not pass on without a word of genuine admiration for the library. At the head of it is Dr. Hugo Bergman, a human dynamo, courteous, suave, kindly, in languages a polyglot if ever there was one—even in that land where most people speak four or five languages. This man speaks and reads Hebrew, Arabic, English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish, Chech, Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, Syriac and a score of dialects which enable him to fill the most difficult job in any library. Short of money, of adequate help, of typewriting machines, of shelving, of card catalogues, in short of all modern equipments, this man manages a library of 200,000 books, supplies the wants of a reading and knowledge-seeking crowd which fills the rooms of the three (formerly five) buildings in Jerusalem, and is superintending the removal of the books to the new and commodious University library building, and keeps in touch with the friends

of the library throughout the world. He thinks nothing of working from sunrise to eleven o'clock at night, is gathering a department of manuscripts—in a word—is one of the young marvels, in human form, who is making new Palestine. His share in the new University, for such is his library, will be a worthy unit in the great scheme which is now in its period of gestation and which will result in a group of buildings around a campus over an amphitheater on the top of a mountain, which will in all respects be as unique as is the City on the Hill which has riveted the attention of men through the ages. If anyone will now ask or question the existence of the University, he can be told without hesitation that a University fit to compare with the best of the long list, beginning with Padua and ending with Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Harvard and Columbia, is in the making, and what is more will take her place in their midst with more speed and less waste of time than any other one, for the simple reason that this one is being built by young men actuated by no other motive except the love of the work and the grandeur of the idea itself.

And what Dr. Magnes and his co-workers are doing for the University, Ruthenberg is doing for the very life of the land. And it seemed most proper that Dr. Magnes introduced him to us—he was one of the visitors who opened the door to Dr. Magnes' "Yovoh." Here is a man brought up and nurtured in revolution, who had lived and worked in other countries and climes, an inspired engineer, if ever there was one, a railroad builder who had the vision to undertake the task of harnessing all the water power in Palestine to supply light, power and electricity for the whole country—and is doing it. Here is a young man, comparatively speaking, who has lived and worked and has attained the calm born of the mastery of an idea and who is steeled to the task of

making Palestine a place to live in where the ordinary needs and comforts of the people may be had. In a cause where so much talking has been done, where so much speculation has been indulged in, where so much praying and useless wailing has been had, it is indeed, fortunate to find so many men of action, men who dare to do things and let others talk. Ruthenberg, however, needs no eulogy; he prefers to complete this task in order to prepare for others, and he is one of those who ever has a quiver full of new ideas and new plans. He is one of those who never tires or retires, as long as there is work to be done.

This brought us to the eve of the Sabbath. What other place can a traveler, for the first time on this hallowed ground, think of on the eve of the Sabbath, than the Kosayl Marovi, the Wailing Wall so-called and thus known to guides and guide books? And as though we needed additional reminder, the Chossid guardian of the Sabbath sounded his trumpet from the balcony of our hotel, calling on and notifying the Shomrai Shabboth that closing time was at hand for all observing Jews. So unto the Jaffa Gate we went, and for the first time noticed the approach of the Sabbath in Jerusalem. The closing of stores and stands, the quiet hurried preparation for the day of rest, were in evidence on all sides.

As we stepped into the narrow lane which leads downward toward the Wall, we found the same closing of stands and small stores owned or conducted by Jews, and going through the Jewish quarter of the old city all became closed, barricaded and locked up, and mostly all were hurrying toward their houses of worship and to the Wall. Here and there an Arab was leading his donkey, a veiled Arab woman walking along. The Arab stores and cafés remained open, but for the most part places were shut tight for the day of

rest. One more downward tending poorly paved alley, and we are on the spot which has been the scene of more tragedy, more talked of, more yearned for, more photographed, painted and etched and described than any other spot since the final destruction of the temple. We meet the women first, all standing, in their multi-colored garments—this open air house of worship has no seats, no benches, no armchairs—all stand or lean against the Wall, as long as there is room. It is a house of worship consisting of one wall, giant stones about thirty feet from the street—for it is a street, an open street, never closed. Men of all nations go there, some out of curiosity, some for political reasons, some in order to verify their reading, some to complete the tour mapped out for them by books or some other agency, some to satisfy the longings of a lifetime to stand on the outskirt of the spot where Israel—in its Temple on top of the hill of which this wall was a support—Israel then in all its glory, stood and held communion with its Maker. A narrow house of worship this, scarce ten to fifteen feet wide. Streets, and especially old streets in the Orient, are narrow but this one is and ever was broad enough and roomy enough to have accommodated the travelers, the seekers after the God of Israel throughout the millenia.

Friday night at the Kosayl Marovi: here are the Chasidim in their well-worn gaberdines and fur hats; the Galician and Polish Jews; the Bokhara Jews; the Tunisians; the Turkish the Yemen Jews—Jews of every description and from every corner of the earth. Some come to pray, some to read a psalm, and thus fortified proceed to their own synagogue or Beth Hamidrash to complete their prayers. But still a goodly crowd remains and prays leaning against the same stones of that ancient Wall where hundreds of thousands have stood

and prayed. They lean against the Wall, they stroke the Wall, they kiss it, they seem to speak to it, they pray unto it and into every crevice of it. Five or six services proceed at the same time, and visitors who so desire can join any group they choose. Congregations improvised, are side by side, totally oblivious of what is going on along the Wall. Some conclude as others begin, and so every phase of Oriental Jewish life, as manifested in prayer, is herein enacted and reenacted.

Their Arab neighbors, who are in a minority in the City just now, might be more considerate of the feelings of the worshippers. They might make a detour during prayers at least. But no, their business seems to be so urgent just about that time that they proceed through the groups as though they were really compelled to do so, or directed by some one to do so. And a provokingly impartial administration not only tolerates, but enforces the inviolability of the open doors of this street at all times, on the theory that the open highway must be maintained. The tourists, of course, come trooping from all directions and at all times, generally fortified with cameras and note books, making permanent records and memoranda of what they see or think they see. Everybody is doing it, and has been doing it, throughout the whole time, ever since Jerusalem was set down as a place of interest.

They keep on coming and going. Now the Arab calls the faithful to worship from his high placed minaret, a little earlier than usual, and is heard as he shrieks his call over the combined voices of all those praying in monotone, simply to add to the confusion of voices and to show that they yield nothing; even a Meshumed sneaks along with a sardonic smile, only to be pointed out by all. A little dispute by two venerable men as to precedence of a Kadish, amicably adjusted in accordance with the Din, and the services concluded

by the group we joined — and we proceeded towards our hotel as we came, and by this time every Jewish place along the road is closed in the old city, constituting about three quarters of all; in the new, about the same proportion, for are not the Jewish people a people of storekeepers? But let the people outside the city answer that question.

We are at the hotel where the proprietor has evidently arrived from his synagogue before we did, and a moment later we are cordially invited to Kiddush, which is rendered in due and ancient form, and joined in by all present. His ninety-four year old mother is there, a relic of the past, who has lived to that ripe old age in the climate which has been misrepresented and maligned so often and so much. The meal proceeds punctuated by the time-honored Smiroth sung by the entire family, including the youngest, a girl about fourteen, who sang and intoned the old hymns as intelligently and tunefully as the older people at the board. And as you leave for an after-meal walk, you see and feel the rest which is characteristic of the Sabbath and which descends upon all, so often written about, descending upon Jew and non-Jew alike, and to all who dwell in the old and new city of Jerusalem.

Sabbath morning finds the same rush to the hundreds of synagogues and houses of worship that we saw the evening before. In all their time-honored regalia, with their wives and children, they proceed to prayer. The Churva, built some eighty years ago—a stately and solid structure, the foremost in the city and the Cathedral Synagogue of the Chief Rabbi, who has a synagogue of his own during the year, worshipping here but on stated occasions — attracts most foreign visitors, excepting only those who seek the synagogues of

their own friends and countrymen and favor them by their attendance during their short visit.

The Schacharith services over, and we again proceed to the Kosayl Marovi for the Mussaf services. We find similar groups as we did the night before excepting only that they all appear in their talaysim brought from their homes. An improvised Ohrohn Hakodesh and Al Memmar are furnished by a nearby Beth Hamidrash and services are full and complete. The same lack of unison and harmony prevail, for the groups pray for themselves, oblivious and unconcerned of what is transpiring around them and adjacent to them by their brethren from other climes.

The services of the group we had joined were completed and we proceeded to the Haar Habayis, the hill formerly crowned and occupied by the Temple of Solomon. I have seen Parliament Square in London, the Place de la Concorde in Paris, Reichstaag Square in Berlin, Capitol Square in Washington, the approach to St. Peter's and the hill of St. John Lateran in Rome, the Mosque of Ali in Cairo; but for magnificence of view, of proportions, of grandeur and a fulness of architectural magnificence of this spot when occupied by Solomon's Temple—the others do not compare with this spot. Even the dwarfed Mosque in the Center where the Holy of Holies stood, hidden or rather obscured by the facade of pillars in front and the large but vacant Mosque below, do not detract from the unparalleled magnificence of the spot which Israel's shepherd king brought from the Jebusites and which was magnificently improved by his son Solomon, who erected thereon the temple which dwarfed all similar structures before and after, and which Suleyman the Great, attempted to surpass eighteen hundred years later. From the wall which partly enclosed it, you can look and see in two direc-

tions, two valleys containing a marvelous panorama, and you begin to be impressed with the location of this City upon the Hill, on the rock of ages, open to attack on the north side only, and never approached from any other side by a hostile force. You have seen so much, you have lived through so much in spirit that nothing now counts—the Via Dolorosa, with the inscription upon the Ecce Homo Church along the road is all you now can enter—for the hot sun of midday—contribute to your desire to leave any further inspection in the old city for another occasion. Somehow, nothing more counts. You have been to, and you have seen in spirit, at least, the grandeur which was Jerusalem's and the glory which constituted its Temple and Holy of Holies.

After the Sabbath meal, the wanderlust is upon you again. We proceeded through the residential quarter of the Jewish people in the new city. From street to street you proceed over poorly paved roads, most of which antidate the Jewish revival. These were built by charitable organizations of different countries and look it—unattractive, similar barracks for human beings, small, clumsy and uncomfortable. The air of rest of the Sabbath, however, permeates all. And as the afternoon advances the same groups travel once more to the Mincha services, conducted in all the houses of worship—Yemenites in their talaysim sitting on the floor or low benches, each one reading his portion when called to the Sepher Torah. Bokhara Jews in their multicolored unifroms, and especially the Gaboim; the women in the vestibule or outside at the windows, the Chasidim in their long coats and girdles, and hundreds of others all on the same message bent, fill the streets. The day is concluded with a Shelosh Soodah at Chief Rabbi Kook's synagogue house, where his faithful bodyguard has gathered for the thousandth time, perhaps, or more, to do

him honor, sing praises to the God of Israel, and hearken to the words of wisdom which invariably drop from his learned lips. This man, an honored representative of our ancient faith, is as modern and mentally agile as any twentieth century religious leader in any land. In his discourse, he manifests a fluency of expression, a discernment and learning which would do credit to any of our great leaders of the past. His discourse is preceded by the Smiroth sung one by one, without any leadership, by those around the table; sung so beautifully as though they had been doing nothing else during an entire lifetime. When that had been concluded by the Yoh Ribbohn Ohlam, in which all joined, the spokesman of religious Palestine—Rabbi Kook—began, in a whisper at first which grew in force to a well-modulated, conversational tone.

The room had somehow become filled, where scarcely a minyan began, were found at least fifty or sixty, young and old, tier upon tier, two rows of older men in their fur-trimmed hats, a sprinkling of modern garbed visitors, the younger men, his students, all came to listen and to learn. The sun was setting, the room grew darker, and assumed a background of chiaro scuro hue, beckoning to a Rembrandt—he of the Night Watch—to adequately portray the combination of features glowing with veneration for the speaker—this modern prophet, intense with a youthful interest in the things he was saying, in the explanations of the text from Bolok which he was setting forth and clarifying, until he had talked deep into the early evening when you could seen nothing and his well-modulated voice alone was audible in the room crowded with breathless listeners. And an electric light somewhat suddenly illuminated the crowded room without the slightest effect on speaker or hearer alike. His theme

alone and his clarification thereof were paramount. I wondered when I saw that group of faces, row upon row, that the Jewish artists bent on painting and picturing the best and most typical of Jewish scenes, had so long overlooked this most remarkable of all groups, whereas they had painted and etched ad nauseam the things that are hideous in Jewish life—the goose market in Cracow, the Schnorers in all ghettos, the fantastic earlocks of Jews in all countries, the gloom-inspiring forms at the Wailing Wall, the harrowing and blood-curdling scenes of the pogroms and the victims of plagues and persecution, yes, but the Rembrandt-like group of learned Jews, as thrilled and electrified by a learned discourse by one of the great scholars, that has remained unnoticed. Perhaps Strook or Pilichowski may yet be prevailed upon to tarry a while and attend one of these functions, and the rest will come easy, for they will not want for inspiration at these scenes. They cannot escape it. Then they will not only paint or sketch Rabbi Kook at reast, but in action,—inspired and inspiring.

That was indeed a full day. Body became tired and mind more than overwhelmed by the multicolored scenes, the saddening groups in the many synagogues and the climax at the Sholosh Sooda of Chief Rabbi Kook.

We had been travelling at high speed but that was all in the City, old and new. True, we had been to Hebron and Bethlehem and Jericho, but there was nothing new in those cities. We were not the first visitors to be refused admission to the Meorath Hamachpelah in Hebron, but we at least had the satisfaction of disappointing the hundreds of professional beggars who trouped about us and our motor car. No entry into Machpelah, no money to its inconsiderate keepers. The Kayver Rochayl came next. Of course, all who pass stop and pay their loving respects to the burial spot of that beautiful

mother in Israel "who has been weeping for her children" through the ages.

But now on Sunday morning, we set out early—we, a quartet of kindly meraglim, to spy out every nook and corner of the land to the north of us, to the east and to the west. And so at a speed of sixty to seventy kilometers an hour, we began to make our way toward Tel Aviv, the modern miracle city which sprang up as if by magic in a little over twenty-five years. Twenty years ago the arrival of a girl from England, who desired to write letters to her relatives, compelled the then postmaster to go to Jaffa for an additional supply of stamps because he never contemplated the arrival of a new visitor, and now the husband of that girl built a huge post office to answer to the needs of a city containing about fifty thousand souls—all Jewish. Toward that city we were now tending, flanked by two natural propagandists, the chauffeur and the guide, explaining everything in English and in Hebrew—the new Hebrew which the vast majority prefer to the old Ashkenazik, with some of which we were acquainted.

We first strike a new communist or co-operative colony, for the last three years working and paying as they go along. Hills, roads and valleys pass by, Arabic villages all alike, mud walls and hovels, few, if any, rising to the dignity of what we call homes, surrounded by poorly worked fields, in striking contrast with the houses and fields owned by Jewish colonists, none too elegant, but homelike. And there began to spread before our eyes the Jewish-owned orange groves, almond trees, date trees, vineyards and crops of corn (maize) as far as the eye could see, going along over a fine road and stopping only to examine the high spots—Rischon le Zion, one of the oldest, where the president of the Vineyard Wine Company took the trouble to show us a remarkably well-

equipped wine cellar with one hundred and five amphoras holding thirty-five thousand bottles each—all as modern and up-to-date as can be found in any part of the world. And then we met Meyrowitz—everybody knows Meyrowitz, the oldest colonist in Palestine, who, as he plaintively reproached us, said: "Why did you let me wait for you these forty years before you came to Palestine? " He had seen and heard things which few others did—did this patriarchal first settler of Palestine's advance guard, when it took real courage and a real man even to dare think that Palestine would be what it is today. Herzl just about came upon the scene when he had already worked for the liberation and re-establishment of Zion, and did not wait for tardy international justice which was so slow in coming.

What a wonderful colony have the Rothchilds modestly and unostentatiously planted and established here. Would that there were more of them. And their supreme virtue is that they do not talk. They do things. Deeds, not words, is their motto. No tablets to commemorate their work. The colony speaks for itself.

And then Tel Aviv, the dream city washed ashore right near Jaffa,—one seems to think that like Michael Angelo's "David," which he was said to have found in the marble, so Tel Aviv, some old city engulfed ages ago, was simply left by a receding sea. The youngest city in the world it is — a most virile infant community, equipped with nice wide, well-paved streets, busses, autos, stores, school houses, homes, palaces, the home of the Jewish "Who's Who" in Palestine, banks, insurance companies, policemen who have little else to do but regulate traffic—a city which is built on the sea and whose principal streets lead to the sea. And the marvelous, the unique characteristic about this beautiful white city

is the fact that its inhabitants are young people. The oldest child in the city at its Twentieth Anniversary celebration was twenty years old. And the city looks young and is young. The older folks must all be imported. They were not born in Tel Aviv. It did not exist when they were born. It is a city with marvelous schools and public buildings, with a Menorah atop of its water works tower used for the public on Chanucka and announcing to an entire world that the light of Israel will never and shall never be extinguished, and that on that occasion, at least, Israel fought a winning fight. It is worthy of a trip all by itself, to see that Menorah enthroned on that height in Tel Aviv. The hotel owner is building a chain of hotels throughout Palestine. These men, all young, are intensely in earnest. They simply mean to succeed. They cannot be permanently stopped. That is the spirit of Tel Aviv. They continue to grow, to expand, to multiply. They now need a new railway station—the old one won't do. A great theater is in the process of building, almost completed, where the Hebrew tongue will reign supreme, all Hebrew—the policeman, the taxi driver, the guide, the droshke driver, who complains in Hebrew at the slow business he had done on that day, the usual tale in order to increase the tip which goes with his compensation; the dance hall waiter and musician at the casino, on the beach—all talk and sing and quarrel and announce and explain in Hebrew. The spirit is infectious until you begin by saying "Todah Rabbah" yourself.

In the morning, we proceeded to Petach Tikvoh, another of the older colonies, and experience the hospitality of a Jewish home, the Friedman home. What an Ayshes Chayil this Mrs. Friedman is. Her husband away in far-off America, she looks after his business, after the children, one about to become Bar

Mitzvah, and the teacher is there: "Chayeh Soroh" is the Parsha, so she could not wait but took hold of the problem of the boy's Bar Mitzvah preparation herself. Was she not born in Jerusalem? Therefore this is but a simple problem. She takes us through the vineyard and shows us the ripening grapes which, for the first time in four years, will yield a record-breaking vintage. We meet the watchmen, one a colonel from Trumpledoor's regiment, and a twenty-year old Palestinian lad who would be insulted at the offer of a gratuity. A book we may send them, for these Shomrim read literature, keep abreast of the times even while they work—but a tip, never. And bidding us Sholom they give the ladies in the party a package of new grapes for the rest of the trip on that day. We spend the evening at one of the casinos on the beach, and marvel at the future possibilities of this Palestinian Nice and Cannes and San Raphael or San Remo, who have everything the others have except the gambling tables. The room is here, the sea and climate is the same, and the young men and young women of Tel Aviv will call it into being. They have but to wave their Alladin lamps and they will emerge from the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

To Haifa, discriminated against by the Road Building Department, for the road is poor, we continued on our trip. Why not connect the two cities by a picturesque highway boulevard along the Mediterranean? Cannes and Nice are so connected. Why not create a Palestinian Riviera? And so, after experiencing some of the blessings of the régime of the Turks, who had an aversion to road building, and the efforts of the Arabs, always primitive, wretched, as to homes and public highways, we reached Haifa, and proceeded to the highest point of Mount Carmel in order to take in at one sweep the old city and the new, as well as of the possibilities of that great harbor

and the new city which is to grow and be built northward. And if the trend of city planning in Palestine has taught anything, the indications are unmistakable that a great maritime city with piers and breakwaters and railroad terminals will appear in Haifa and immediately to the north of it. To complain of the weather or to criticize the location is nothing short of sacrilege. There simply is nothing more beautiful, more salubrious, more refreshing than this spot, even on a hot day, to say nothing of the climate during the normal period of the year when tourists ought to be pouring into this beautiful spot in Palestine. A city of banks and business establishments, it is bound to continue to play an important role in the development of the country.

In the afternoon, against the warnings of friendly advisers, we started for Tiberias, which is supposed to be the warmest spot in that section. Nahalaal, and the view of the wonderful panorama of the Emek and its fine lot of colonies, all new, mostly planted on swamps which had previously been rendered sanitary and safe by the lives of many chalutzim—a real picture of peace and plenty, with good connecting roads, and we reach the old city of Tiberias after passing through Nazareth and the other places on the road, a strip of Lake Tiberias (or Kinereth), and find the most modern and best equipped hotel in Palestine. Before the evening sets in we see the tombs of Maimonides, Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Meyer Baal Ness and the cluster of schools and synagogues around them. The hot spring and the Kurort adjoining the spring—where the lame and the halt and rheumatic seek and find healing, and a wonderful evening, complete the day. The full moon over the lake, and the acquaintance with practically every guest at the hotel, including two young Palestinians, one an agricultural expert working for the government and one a horti-

culturist, both graduates of American universities, prepared for service in Palestine, concludes another perfect day in this old land of wonders which persists in remaining ever young.

It is to be the last day of our trip in Palestine, and there is so much more to be seen. Our guide has so much more to show and to describe. We ought to see Sfaad, we must see the Ruthenberg plant, we must go through the Emek slowly; so that at six o'clock in the morning we are up, and at seven we are on our way to the Ruthenberg plant. I can now more fully appreciate that fine personality I met on my first day in the office of Dr. Magnes. Here is the great work of a great mind. Here he attempts to, and will in a short time, harness the Jordan and all contributing streams with Lake Tiberias, and that great plant now in the process of completion, will yield light and power and electricity to an entire country. No, we could not miss this work of so great a creative mind. And this man in the beginning of his stay in Palestine took his place with the Chaluzim, and gun in hand he was ever ready to help drive away the marauder or the bandit from the doors of the new colony. Long may he live to give of himself to his people and to his country. And this man looks for no honors and for no mishebayrach. He is giving all—himself to Palestine. He is a real inspiration to all workers in the great cause.

What followed now was but an anti-climax. One can easily see that with this work completed, this engine in the shape of human being, when released from this work, will be prepared to undertake other and even more important works. I can well visualize his reconstructing and amplyifying the pools of Solomon so that they can supply water to a greater area. I can well see him tackle the railroad problem of Palestine and begin weaving a net work of electric railroads which will concentrate the labor of the land in places where it may be

needed. I can well see him work out the plans for roads, piers, wharfs, warehouses and the like—when the present task is finished and disposed of—nothing pertaining to the welfare of Palestine is foreign to a Ruthenberg. A trip through the Emek, Afula, Balfouria and the others, in one Emek and the barrenness of another adjoining, where Jewish effort has not yet taken hold, but convinced me more and more that in time all these problems will yield before work and adequate financial help. How little, indeed, does the world know what is happening here.

A few hours over splendid new roads and we are in Jerusalem once more. We must see the tomb of the Kings, the Church of the Redeemer and a few more wonders in the old city, for we are curious whether the same good will exists here as in Bethlehem and whether the same method of keeping the peace prevails in both places between the sects of hostile Christians. We had seen the tomb of Absolom and the cemetery on the afternoon of the second day, so that we had made a complete circuit of the old city and gazed upon her stately walls and battlements from every side and from every point of vantage.

Thus ended our last day in Jerusalem and our trip was but to be supplemented the next day by seeing the terrain along the Mediterranean down to the border on our way to Kantara, and with these were concluded the calendar of high spots viewed in our altogether brief stay in Palestine. But the feeling that we must return for a longer stay became stronger as we were leaving. We must do this thing slowly. We must see every museum, every hospital, every Home, every School, every Yeshiva, every colony, every great undertaking in the upbuilding, so that when the work is done we will be able to trace it from and compare it with the meager

and small beginnings. Yes, we must, we will return. This was altogether too short a stay in Palestine. We saw but the results. We had no time for a study of the processes which culminated in what we saw. We must gather the testimony of those who have wrought all this and see them while they work, not content ourselves with glancing through their posthumous reminiscences, and thus, even though only for a moment, become part of the work in the land of our forefathers. God grant that the opportunity will be ours.

It would be unfair to conclude these rambling statements and reminiscences without a word or two in the nature of a conclusion, such as it is, as to my views about Palestine and its future as deduced from the facts and features which came within my purview during my short panoramic trip through Palestine and its points of interest. Let me say at the outset then, that I did not come to Palestine totally uninformed as to what was to be seen, what were the points of interest, what was of prime importance and what of passing importance. A lifetime of study and reading and inquiry and magazine reading, so to say, forced the all important things to my attention and did not require any preliminary study as would a trip to Indo-China or Ceylon or Australia or Japan. A fairly good acquaintance with Bible history and Jewish historians and other less important works of travel prepared me for this visit, and I knew what I wanted to see and verify. Although outside of the breastworks of Zionist politics and political leadership, I have nevertheless been interested as a private in the work of Zionism from the days of the First Basel Congress to this very day. I have met in one way or another a great many of the Zionist leaders of the past quarter of a century—leaders of all parties, some of them intimately, and came to know their work and their message. And

they were certainly a remarkable body of men—Sokolow, Weitzman, Schmarya Levien, Motzkin, Wise, Brandeis, De Haas, Lipsky, to mention but a few choice spirits, all endowed with a remarkable gift of explaining the leit motif of their lives, which is Zion.

And finally the Zionist mission as recited in periodical daily press and pamphlets, many of them classics composed by these enthusiastic propagandists, have been part of my reading these many years. Who could do otherwise who has had some Jewish training and Jewish background? I may therefore be pardoned for adding some conclusions which I have drawn from what I now saw when superimposed upon what I read and what I heard at Zionist meetings and Zionist leaders in private and in public.

In my humble opinion, Zionism as exemplified by the Palestine I saw in July, 1929, was never a more vital and virile force than it is today. These men who have been leading in the Zionist movement, have actually evolved a workable plan and theory, and are building a new Palestine. The obstacles and difficulties may have seemed insurmountable but they are yielding, one by one, to a determination to succeed which is becoming more manifest every day. Rocks and deserts have yielded to the hammer and to the plow. Roads and fertile fields have taken the place of impassable mountain roads and miasmic and malarial swamps. The same determination to succeed elsewhere, the same courage displayed in the face of new difficulties, will yield similar results. What is needed is new capital, new colonies, more trees, more men, more visitors, a better understanding abroad of what is being done and how much more could be done, if the men and the means were available.

And here let me say that nothing is more important than to dispel the hostile propaganda not only of our enemies but of our own people. It may be honestly a mistaken view but is nevertheless deadly. Palestine, thank God, has long ceased to be a country which destroys its inhabitants. Why not proclaim far and wide that Palestine's climate is a healthy one? Why not stop calling Palestine a two-month-in-the year country? Why do they, the visitors, all come in March alone? Why not all year? Palestine can accommodate them throughout the entire year. Why not show what has been done by these few? Why not call upon the other ninety per cent. of the Jewish people who have done nothing, that the time is ripe for them to come forward and do their share in this work which has, up to the present been done by the few? And may I not suggest that the leadership concern itself less with the dispute and the discussion how the work is to be continued and proceed with the doing of the work? More colonies are needed; more money is sorely needed; more land is needed; help Ussishkin buy more land, for he knows what he is about. The strips on the map, of land owned by the Zionist Organization is distressingly out of proportion with the land owned and neglected by others. Too much time and energy and genuflections are wasted on the recalcitrant few who are rich; a corresponding expenditure of effort would wake up the middle men and a number of those would compensate the extraction of a larger amount from an unwilling rich prospect. Great causes, as well as great structures, are maintained by the many and the poor, and generally only those endure. The Kosayl Maarovi was built by the poor artisans, and it endures. The library of the University can be built up on, and by small donations of money and of books. It would hardly pay

to wait for one large endowment, for it may be too slow in arriving.

Let no one say that we have a scarcity of propagandists. Every resident of Palestine is a propagandist. Every town, every colony, speaks its own message. Every school child is a living reason why we must prevail. Too much cannot be done to keep the issue clear—are you with us or are you against us? It will avail little to claim exemption by reason of other work. None is of more paramount importance than is this. And no other work will be eternal. This work is. Let those who invest millions on pet schemes of their own, no matter how well intentioned, lay no flattering or salving unction to their soul that their work is just as important as is this. It is not, and cannot be. Palestine carries more eternal and elemental problems in its train, more is bound up in its upbuilding, more depends on its final establishment as the permanent homeland of the Jewish people — at least of those who can find no asylum elsewhere—than all the other problems which have vexed a sorely tried people since the beginning of the diaspora. The time is here. God forbid that the opportunity should knock at our door and pass on, as opportunity has a way of doing with men, as well as with nations. Especially is this true of the Jews of America. It is their privilege to come forward with the money needed to do all this. And they must do this lest in the wisdom of Providence help will come from another point, and then American Jewry will have allowed the opportunity to pass by them and will have sold their birthright—and for what? Here is a generation of young men and young women in Palestine who have given up and are ready to give up their life in order that Palestine might be born anew. They cannot be lured from their tasks, they cannot be bribed. They are not

for sale. They are bound up with the future of Palestine. And all that is required of the three million American Jews is to render their share of the expense, the money, the means of aiding this army of young men and young women of bringing into being to the fullest extent, and as contemplated by our leaders of the past and the present, a homeland for the homeless and persecuted of our people throughout the world —a comparatively slight sacrifice is asked for—and will they refuse to see the light? I cannot, and will not, believe it.

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